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Some Verses

By

Will Bostick



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St. Louis
1914

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by
Will Bostick



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no,

To My Mother

who spent her life making others comfortable and happy; who never seemed to grow old, and whose memory will be kept young in the hearts of those who knew her.

Foreword

These verses are intended for circulation among friends. They will, therefore, be judged gently. There is no excuse for their appearance, except, perhaps, a desire to get together odds and ends of manuscript which have accumulated for several years, in idle or sentimental moments.

If some pleasant memory of youth may be brought to one who is old; if a breath of the country may be wafted to one who is lonely in the midst of the crowded city; or if some bit of foolish rhyme may cause a momentary smile to flit across the face of one who is sad, then this little book will have justified its existence.

St. Louis, October, 1914.

W. B.

The Cynic

It isn't you, this cynic cold,
Unsoftened by some tale of woe;
Suspicious of the beggar's plea;
Too skeptical to alms bestow;
It isn't you.

It isn't you who fears the earth
Is ruled alone by power of gold;
That honor, even, has its price,
And consciences are bought and sold;
It isn't you.

It isn't you who sneers at love—
Who calls it but a silly myth—
A thing invented by the scribes,
To garnish foolish verses with;
It isn't you.

It isn't you, with heart of stone—
You've loitered somewhere by the way,
Your mind still sweet with child-hood's trust.
Go back and find yourself, I say—
This isn't you.

The Prairie Maiden

She was raised on the broad, rolling prairie,
Far away from the city's un-rest;
For the rules of prim, silly "Convention"
She has only contempt, at the best.
She is simply a young western maiden,
Of "Society's" life not a part;
She's not good at small-talk and flirtation,
But she'd make a delightful sweet-heart.

She's not fragile and white, like the lily,
Neither blossoms her cheek like the rose;
The warm sun of the prairie has browned her,
And with full, sturdy health her face glows.
She has only old Nature's own beauty,
With shrewd touches of art un-applied;
Her brown hair is not dressed in the fashion,
But she'd make an adorable bride.

She knows not, how, with clever contriving,
For position and prestige to fight;
And she deals not in flattery subtle,
For she's candid as open day-light.
She is only a sweet prairie lassie,
All un-used to the world's jealous strife;
She is quite un-affected and guileless,
But she'd make a most lovable wife.

The Doctor's Horse

Forth through the night of inky black,
Over some road of sticky clay;
Through drifted snow; o'er frozen track,
Travels the doctor's dappled-grey.
Though muscles, over-tired, may rack;
Though more than hard has been the day;
Never a thought of turning back—
Cheerfully jogging on the way.

The horse is welcomed far and near
At homes where sickness may be found;
And knows each turn and winding, clear,
Of every road for miles around.
Oft, anxious ears have strained to hear
Those hoof-beats on the frozen ground,
Bringing ease from pain and fear;
And many lips have blessed the sound.

My Prairie Sweetheart

Out in the sunny West land,
Out on the windy plain,
A big, old-fashioned farm-house
Stands by the country lane;
Away out on the prairie,
Where big sun-flowers grow,
And, rolling like the ocean,
The prairie-grass does blow.
The road there seemed so short, once—
The reason why is plain—
There lived a little maiden—
Brown hair, and eyes the same;
And she was sweet and gentle,
And I was young and free;
So thus it happened, Cupid
His arrow shot at me.

The long, cold, winter evenings
So cozily were spent
In that old parlor, courting,
While hours came and went.
The time passed all too quickly,
There by the fire's glow,
While sleet beat 'gainst the window,
And fierce the wind would blow.
The ride back home seemed short, then,
Spite of the storm that beat;
The miles of road, rough-frozen,
Flew 'neath by pony's feet.
I heeded not the darkness,
As through the storm I sped;
My thoughts were rosy tinted,
From which the darkness fled.

We'd drive, on summer evenings,
 'Tween rows of tall sun-flowers,
Which all the roads would border,
 Creating leafy bowers.
Alone upon the highway,
 Yet talking soft and low;
Deep stillness all about us—
 The breeze would gently blow.
Our ride seemed all too short, then,
 Though far from home we drove;
Big sun-flowers brushed the buggy;
 The old moon shone above.
We cared not for the dampness
 Of summer-evening dew—
In touch with Nature's mystic
 Influence were we two.

I thought another sweet-heart
I'd find, where'er I strayed;
I left the winds and prairie,
Also the brown-haired maid.
There's something, now, seems lacking—
Just what, I hardly know—
Perhaps it is the sun-flowers,
Perhaps the blizzard's blow.
The prairie's far away, now;
Smooth city streets I tread;
Brick buildings line the road-sides,
And street-lights shine o'er-head;
Black night is turned to day-light—
No dark drives any more;
And yet, there's something missing,
For romance time is o'er.

The Old Missouri Town

For a darkey what likes ease,
Wants to rest jes' when he please,
Cain't no better place be foun'
Dan a ol' Missouri town.

White folks has to fret an' stew
Cause dey got so much to do;
Has to write, keep books, an' clerk—
Allays got to keep at work.

Niggers cert'ny hates to work;
When dey does dey's boun' to shirk.
While de summer sun shines down
All dey likes is lay aroun'.

Ain' no race-fight worries us,
For de white-folks got no fuss
Wid us niggers' triflin' ways—
Sleepin' nights an' restin' days.

If de pot's a-gittin' low;
Wood all gone; roof leakin' snow—
Nevah mind—de hoss-shoe's nailed,
An' its luck ain't nevah failed.

Ol' Missouri town am slow,
But de nicest place I know.
Lan' of Promise, I'll be boun'—
Ol' Missouri country town.

The Courtship

You Caleb Jones, what does you mean,
A-holdin' me so tight?
You knows you sholy will be seen
By ev'y-one in sight.
Ah never thought you'd act dis way
Out on de dancin' flo'—
You knows what all dese folks will say;
You'se heered folks talk befo'.
You sholy is one awful tease;
Ah knows you means alright;
But quit yo' foolin, Caleb, please—
Don't hold me quite so tight.

Move ovah on de bench a-ways—
Yo' squeezin' up too tight;
Yo' feelin' spoony just becasse
It's such a lubly night.
You knows dat foolish talk ain't true;
You don't mean half you say—
Say dat agin! Me marry you?
You takes my breaf away.
What ails you' left ahm—ain't it free
To act just like yo' right?
If you insists on huggin' me,
Den hug me good an' tight.

A Contrary Man

He was the most contrary man
Who ever came this way;
He turned the day into the night—
The night he turned to day.

He cried where other folks would laugh,
He laughed where others wept;
And, when most other people worked,
That was the time he slept.

At parties, where the rest wore tiles,
He'd wear a big straw hat;
And, when the others carried canes,
He'd carry a base-ball bat.

He kept his business to himself,
So no one interfered;
And, when his time had come to die,
He simply disappeared.

Are We Condemned?

If Sin steals up, and, unaware,
We fail to see him standing there,
With countenance so full of hate,
Until he seizes us—too late;
If where he stands seems empty air,
And all about us pure and fair;
If nothing causes us alarm,
And we are without fear of harm,
And, suddenly, with startled gasp,
We find ourselves within his grasp;
If, 'gainst our will, without a thought,
We in Sin's open arms are caught,
Are we condemned?

If, while our Guardian, Conscience, sleeps,
The wily tempter on us creeps,
And gathers us to his embrace,
Before we see his cunning face;
If, all unfearful of his sting,
Our mind is on some other thing;
If we look not for his attack,
As he slips up behind our back,
And, suddenly, without a sound,
His cruel talons clasp us round;
If, without thought of doing wrong,
We're quickly bound in Satan's thong,
Are we condemned?

If, by experience, sorely earned,
Our lesson has been fully learned,
And Sin, in that especial guise,
We will, here-after, recognize;
If we, by days of grief, have paid
For each hour's pleasure that Sin made;
If Conscience, wakening too late
To save us from our sinful fate,
Does sting, and burn, and tear, and grip,
And lash us with his fiery whip;
If he refuses to relent,
Though we most earnestly repent,
Are we condemned?

Summer

The sun shone down, relentless,
Upon the scorching street;
Down on the teeming city,
Which stifled in the heat.
My pulses throbbed and bounded,
And dizzy whirled my brain;
To toil of daily routine
My duty called in vain.

I sought the shady forest,
All decked with leaf and bloom;
I felt the wood-land's quiet,
And breathed its sweet perfume.
The water softly rippled,
As by the stream I lay;
A breeze stole gently past me,
And bore my care away.

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